



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 22-3913, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

AN HONORABLE RECOGNITION OF ABRAHAM BOLDEN

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden was born on January 19, 1935, in East St Louis, Illinois, to the parents of Daniel and Ophelia Bolden; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden has five siblings--Daniel Bolden Jr., Benjamin Bolden, Cecelia Bolden, Ezra Bolden, who have all preceded him in death, and Faye Buck his only living sibling; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden, in 1952, attended Lincoln High School, in East St. Louis, Illinois; and attended college on a full scholarship at Lincoln University, in Jefferson City, Missouri, where he graduated "cum Laude" and received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1956; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden, in 1956, married the love of his life, Barbara Hardy, whom he grew up with, and was married to for 49 years upon her passing on December 27, 2005; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden and Barbara Bolden had three children--Ahvia Maria (deceased 2021), Abraham Jr. (deceased 2021), and Dr. Daa'im Shabazz--and two grandchildren--Ismail and Cyndi Bolden; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden had a passion for law enforcement; and after graduating college, he became the first "Negro" investigator to be hired by Pinkerton National Detective Agency in 1956 and in 1957. Where he served as an Illinois State Police Trooper, in Peoria, Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden in 1959, applied for a United States Secret Service position. On October 30, 1960 special agent in charge Paul J. Paterni swore Bolden in as the first "Negro" to work for the United States Secret Service; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden in 1962 ranked second in the nation in solving counterfeit and check-forging cases; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden, because of his exceptional work, received a special acknowledgement from President John F. Kennedy, who met Bolden in front of a washroom assignment at McCormick Place in Chicago, Illinois on April 28, 1961, at 8:30 p.m. Where the President asked Bolden to join the White House Secret Service detail in Washington, D.C. Bolden accepted and was the first "Negro" ever to be handpicked by a president to serve in this capacity. John F. Kennedy referred to him as the "Jackie Robinson" of the Secret Service; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden on June 6, 1961, was assigned to the presidential detail for 30 days. After the 30 days, Bolden elected not to remain on the assignment. They then reassigned him back to Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden's bravery and loyalty came at a price for exposing racism and unprofessionalism within the U. S. Secret Service and they indicted him on May 22, 1964, for discussing a bribe with two known counterfeiters. On July 5, 1964, criminal actions began charging him with bribery; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden had two trials leading up to dismissal and imprisonment. On July 7, 1964, the trial began, and on July 11th, the jury was deadlock and a mistrial was declared. From August 3-12, 1964, he was retried and found guilty. On September 4, 1964, he received a letter dismissing him as a secret-service agent. On June 26, 1966, he was

imprisoned for three years and three months brought about on false charges; and released from prison on September 25, 1969, with having to serve two in an half years on probation; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden upon being released from prison, returned to his job as a quality control supervisor for Ingersoll Products Division in Chicago, who held his job while he served time. Abraham Bolden worked in the capacity of quality control manager for Ingersoll and other metal fabricating industries for 35 years, retiring on September 11, 2001; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden in 2008 became a published author writing his memoir, “The Echo from Dealey Plaza;” and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden received many commendations in 2008. Alpha Phi Alpha Award for Courage; 2008 Scottish Hugo’s Companion Tankard Award for Courage, the African American Arts Alliance Award for Excellence. Abraham Bolden was the winner of the 2015 Oakland Pen Award for Non-Fiction Writings of Courage and the National Urban League cited Bolden as one of America’s outstanding black men; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden would not give up on himself and needed to right the wrong to clear his name. In doing so, he sought pardons from three presidents-Richard Nixon, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama; and

WHEREAS, they finally granted Abraham Bolden a Presidential pardon by President Joe Biden on April 26, 2022 at the age of 87; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Bolden has proven he is a man worthy of trust and confidence; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, congratulates Abraham Bolden on the well-deserved honor that he is receiving; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of same be tendered to Abraham Bolden.